

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Recommendations



Executive Summary

Reflecting the advocacy and priorities of each Senator, the Senate Committee on Ways and Means Fiscal Year 2025 recommendations take a thoughtful and proactive approach to manage the budget responsibly, doubling down on our strategy to make Massachusetts more affordable, accessible, and competitive, while shaping a more fiscally sustainable path.

As a prudent and fiscally sound plan, the Committee's budget strategically invests in programs essential to assisting our most vulnerable populations and supporting the state's economic health during this period of tax revenue volatility. It dedicates available resources in a range of focused areas crucial to moving Massachusetts forward, including education, housing, local aid, regional transportation, mental health, economic and workforce development, and much more.

Aligning state spending growth with current tax revenue growth, the Committee's budget recommends a total of \$57.9 billion in spending, a \$1.8 billion increase over the Fiscal Year 2024 General Appropriations Act (GAA). This sensible spending recommendation is based on a tax revenue estimate of \$41.5 billion for FY 2025, which is \$208 million less than revenues assumed in the FY 2024 GAA, representing nearly flat growth, as agreed upon during the Consensus Revenue process in January.

As we adjust to account for a changing economic landscape and a tightening fiscal environment, the Committee's FY 2025 budget adheres to disciplined and responsible fiscal stewardship. Our budget does not raise taxes, nor does it draw down available reserves from the Stabilization Fund – i.e. the Rainy Day Fund, or the Transitional Escrow Fund while judiciously utilizing one-time resources to maintain balance. Mindful that we must continue to build up and maintain robust reserves in the event of the next economic downturn, our budget ensures the Rainy Day Fund, which has to-date grown to a record high of over \$8 billion, will close FY 2025 with a healthy balance estimated in excess of \$9 billion.

With these budget recommendations, the Commonwealth's fiscal foundation is certain to remain on firm footing as we support our state's economic health, meet the needs of our residents, and position Massachusetts to compete and move forward on the road to long-term fiscal sustainability and success.

Maximizing Fair Share Investments to Improve Education and Transportation

In accordance with the consensus revenue agreement reached in January with the Healey-Driscoll Administration and the House Committee on Ways and Means, the FY 2025 budget includes \$1.3 billion in revenues generated from the Fair Share surtax.

As FY 2025 represents the second year where this source of revenue is available, the Committee's budget dedicates these Fair Share revenues into an array of important initiatives to further strengthen our state's economic foundation by expanding access to quality public education and improving the state's transportation infrastructure.

Notable Fair Share ***Education*** investments include:

- \$170 million for Universal School Meals.
- \$150 million for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grant program, which is matched with \$325 million in funds from the General Fund and the High-Quality Early Education & Care Affordability Fund, for a total investment of \$475 million.
- \$117.5 million for free community college for all across the Commonwealth.
- \$105 million to expand financial aid programs for in-state students attending state universities through MASSGrant Plus, which is in addition to the \$175.2M for scholarships funded through the General Fund.
- \$80 million for Childcare Affordability, expanding access to income-eligible childcare for families making 85% state median income.
- \$65 million for EEC Provider Rates, including \$20 million in new rates.
- \$15 million for the CPPI Pre-K Initiative, matching \$17.5 million in funds from the General Fund, for a total of \$32.5M to support a pathway to universal pre-kindergarten expansion, including in Gateway Cities.
- \$10 million for wraparound supports to boost Community College and State University student persistence, which is matched with the \$18 million in SUCCESS funds from the General Fund, for a total of \$28 million.
- \$10 million for Early Literacy Initiatives.
- \$7.5 million for School-based Mental Health Supports and Wraparound Services.
- \$5 million for Early College and Innovation Pathways.

Notable Fair Share ***Transportation*** investments include:

- \$250 million for the Commonwealth Transportation Fund (CTF), which will leverage additional borrowing capacity of the CTF and increase investments in transportation infrastructure by \$1.1 billion over the next 5 years. This \$250 million includes:
 - \$127 million to double operating support for the MBTA.
 - \$63 million in debt service to leverage additional borrowing capacity.

- \$60 million in operating support for MassDOT.
- \$125 million for Roads and Bridges Supplemental Aid for cities and towns, including \$62.5 million for local road project with extra weight given to rural projects.
- \$120 million for Regional Transit Funding and Grants to support the work of the Regional Transit Authorities that serve the Commonwealth, which together with general fund spending funds RTAs at a record \$214 million. Fair share funding includes:
 - \$66 million in direct operating support for the Regional Transit Authorities.
 - \$40 million for systemwide implementation of fare-free transit service.
 - \$10 million to incentivize connections between regional transit routes.
 - \$4 million to support expanded mobility options for the elderly and people with disabilities.
- \$24.5 million for Commuter Rail Capital Improvements.
- \$23 million to support a low-income fare relief program at the MBTA.
- \$15 million for Municipal Small Bridges and Culverts.
- \$7.5 million for Water Transportation, funding operational assistance for ferry services.

Education

The Senate Ways and Means Committee budget takes a significant step in fulfilling the promise of the Senate President’s vision by implementing a Student Opportunity Plan to expand access and widen pathways to high-quality educational opportunities to Massachusetts children from birth through adulthood, from childcare to Higher Education, meeting our obligation to make Massachusetts affordable and equitable for our residents and competitive for employers.

Early Education and Care

Building off the momentum of last year, the Senate Ways and Means Committee budget makes a sizeable investment of \$1.58 billion to prioritize the accessibility and affordability of our high-quality early education and care sector. With this increased level of funding, we are further building upon a sturdy foundation to support our early education and care workforce in an impactful way, while ensuring accessible and affordable care for children and families across the state.

- \$475 million for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Stabilization Grants, which have proven successful at stabilizing the early education and care sector by supporting critical operational and workforce needs.
- \$417.2 million for Income-Eligible Childcare and \$356.5 million for Supportive and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Childcare, providing critical services for families eligible for subsidized care.
- \$80 million for Childcare Affordability, expanding eligibility for income-eligible childcare to families making 85% state median income.

- \$65 million for EEC Provider Rates, including \$20 million in new rates.
- \$53.6 million for EEC Quality Improvement Initiatives, with \$6 million supporting the Summer Step Up program.
- \$32.5 million for the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative to expand access to universal pre-kindergarten and preschool opportunities in underserved areas.
- \$20 million for Childcare Resource and Referral Centers to assist parents, childcare providers, employers, and community groups in navigating the state’s early education and care landscape.
- \$18.5 million for grants to Head Start programs to maintain access to early education services for low-income families.
- \$5 million for grants to early education and care providers for childhood mental health consultation services.
- \$2.5 million for a new public-private pilot program to encourage employers to create and support new childcare slots, with an emphasis on serving children most in-need.

EARLY ED ACT. The Senate has led the conversation - thanks to Senate President Spilka - on expanding access to affordable & high-quality early education and care across the Commonwealth. Building off the Senate’s unanimous passage of the comprehensive *EARLY ED Act* in March, the Committee’s budget takes significant steps to transform the state’s relationship with the early education sector by improving affordability and access for families, increasing pay for early educators, and ensuring the sustainability and quality of early education and care programs. The Committee’s budget codifies several provisions from the Senate’s *EARLY ED Act*, including:

- *Making the C3 Operational Grant Program Permanent*
 - The Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) operational grant program, which the Senate has steadfastly funded through the state budget, provides monthly payments directly to early education and care programs throughout the state. Currently, more than 92 percent of early education and care programs in the Commonwealth receive these grants. This program, which has become a model nationwide, has proven successful at increasing the salaries of early educators, reducing tuition costs for families, and expanding the number of available childcare slots beyond pre-pandemic capacity.
 - The Committee’s budget makes this program permanent while also adding provisions to direct more funds from the C3 program to early education and programs that serve children receiving childcare subsidies from the state and youth with high needs.
 - The Committee’s budget also includes \$475 million to fully-fund the C3 operational grant program for the second fiscal year in a row.
- *Expanding Eligibility for Childcare Subsidies*
 - The Committee’s budget improves affordability by expanding eligibility for childcare subsidies to families making up to 85 per cent of the state median income (SMI), which is \$124,000 for a family of four. Currently, initial eligibility for

subsidies is restricted to families making less than 50 per cent of SMI, which is \$73,000 for a family of four.

- The Committee’s budget also eliminates cost-sharing fees for families receiving childcare subsidies who fall below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). In addition, the budget caps fees for all other families receiving subsidies at seven per cent of the family’s income, ensuring that families receiving state assistance are not burdened with unaffordable fees.
- The Committee’s budget includes \$80 million specifically for making childcare more affordable, including by creating subsidy slots for newly-eligible families and ensuring that early educators can access subsidies to send their own children to childcare.
- *Establishing a Career Ladder for Early Educators*
 - The Committee’s budget directs the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to develop a career ladder for early educators that establishes recommended salary and benefit guidelines that are commensurate with public school teachers. It encourages programs that receive C3 grants to increase pay for their staff and make progress toward fully implementing this career ladder.
 - The Committee’s budget also requires reimbursement rates for childcare subsidies to be established based on the actual cost of providing high-quality early education and care, including staffing costs.
 - These workforce development policies are enhanced by investments of \$45 million to annualize the FY 2024 budget’s increase to the reimbursement rate for early educators who serve children receiving state subsidies, \$20 million for a new increase to the reimbursement rate, and \$5 million for early educator scholarships.
- *Creating a Matching Grant Pilot Program for Employers Investing in Child Care*
 - The Committee’s budget also brings employers to the table by establishing a competitive grant program to encourage employer investments in new early education and care slots across the Commonwealth, with preference given to proposals that prioritize families with lower incomes and those who are located in childcare deserts.
 - With matching funds from employers, this pilot program will funnel \$5 million toward creating new childcare slots.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Dedicating vital resources to support all school districts across Massachusetts – urban, suburban, regional, vocational–technical, and rural – the Committee’s budget further deepens the Senate’s commitment to our public K-12 education system, making investments that are impactful, ensuring we continue to meet the growing needs of our communities, our schools, and our students.

Chapter 70/The Student Opportunity Act. Consistent with our unyielding commitment to faithfully implement the Student Opportunity Act by FY 2027, we meet our obligations and fund Chapter 70 at its highest level ever at \$6.9 billion, representing an increase of \$316 million over FY 2024. Aware of the financial challenges facing school districts, the Committee’s budget increases minimum aid for school districts to a historic level of \$104 per pupil, delivering an additional \$37 million in resources to school districts across the state. With these investments, we are meeting the moment and providing crucial support to school districts confronting the increasing cost pressures that come with delivering high-quality education to all students.

School District Reimbursements. The Committee’s budget devotes additional resources to support school districts with the costs of special education, charter school tuition, regional school transportation, and educating students in our rural communities. The Committee’s budget provides \$492.2 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker, reimbursing school districts for the high cost of educating students with disabilities. It also includes \$198.9 million to reimburse school districts at 100 per cent for costs incurred when students leave to attend charter schools, \$99.4 million for regional school transportation, and \$15 million in funding for rural school aid.

- \$59.4 million for Adult Basic Education.
- \$47 million for Early College, Innovation Pathways, and other post-secondary programming to prepare students for success in multiple avenues in post-secondary life.
- \$29.4 million for the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) program.
- \$15 million for Rural School Aid.
- \$15 million for Early College Programs and \$13.1 million for Dual Enrollment, to continue providing high school students with the opportunity to take college courses prior to graduation.
- \$6 million for Social Emotional Learning Grants to help K-12 schools bolster social emotional learning supports for students.
- \$5.4 million for Innovation Pathways to continue to connect students to trainings and post-secondary opportunities in the industry sector with a focus on STEM fields.
- \$2.25 million for the Genocide Education Trust Fund to support ongoing efforts to educate middle and high school students on the history of genocide.
- \$1 million for Hate Crimes Prevention Grants to support K-12 schools with the education and prevention of hate crimes and incidences of bias in public schools.

Higher Education

As a long-standing cornerstone of our Commonwealth’s economic foundation, our public higher education institutions continue to adjust and confront fiscal challenges related to slowing student enrollment and aging infrastructure. Recognizing that demographics are shaping the future of higher education and its role in our state’s economic ecosystem, this budget provides over \$2 billion in investments to expand access to public higher education for all, while sustaining supports for our state colleges and universities vital to the institutional fabric of our state.

- \$760.5 million for the University of Massachusetts, our world-class public research university system.
- \$380.7 million for the fifteen community colleges, including \$2 million for mental and behavioral health supports.
- \$366.7 million for the nine state universities, including \$2 million for mental and behavioral health support.
- \$175.2 million for the Scholarship Reserve, including \$5 million for Early Educator Scholarships to develop workforce in a high-need industry.
- \$28.3 million for the higher education wraparound services, including \$18.3 million in General Fund resources, to support wraparound services for the influx of new students coming to community colleges campuses as a result of Free Community College.
- \$5 million for the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative to support high school students with intellectual disabilities ages 18–22 with increased access to higher education opportunities, including \$3 million for planning grants and \$2 million for the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative Trust Fund to support ongoing implementation of the landmark 2022 public higher education access law throughout our public higher education system.

Free Community College. The Committee’s budget codifies into law a universal community college program — free of tuition and fees — expanding economic opportunity for our residents seeking a good job and an entryway into the middle class. In addition, the Committee’s budget invests \$117.5 million to support this vital economic and workforce development initiative, delivering on Senate President Spilka’s pledge to permanently enshrine free community college into law in an affordable and equitable manner across the Commonwealth, while leaving no federal dollars on the table.

Local and Regional Aid

Reflective of the Senate’s long-standing commitment to a strong and collaborative state-local partnership, the Committee’s budget dedicates meaningful resources to support all regions and communities across the Commonwealth, further ensuring that all of our cities and towns remain fundamental to our state’s economic success and competitiveness.

Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA). Supporting this partnership, the Committee’s budget provides certainty for cities and towns, funding UGGA at \$1.30 billion, an increase of \$38.1 million over FY 2024. With this infusion of state dollars, all 351 cities and towns will receive critical funds to maintain essential public services at the local level, while managing through stiffening fiscal pressures.

Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs). Acting as a bridge to economic opportunity, RTAs continue to serve as an essential public good, providing vital services connecting commuters, students,

seniors, and people with disabilities. To that end, the Committee’s budget provides \$214 million to support our regional public transportation system as a critical economic lifeline, including \$120 million dedicated from Fair Share resources to expand regional bus service, implement systemwide fare free transit service, incentivize connections between routes, and provide grants to support RTA commuter operations.

PILOT. In addition to traditional sources of local aid like Chapter 70 and UGGA, the Committee’s budget increases payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for state-owned land to \$53 million, providing a valuable source of revenue to cities and towns to fund municipal and school services, public safety, and other essential local services.

Arts, Culture and Libraries. Across Massachusetts, our arts, culture, and libraries are institutions central to the fabric of our communities. Ensuring that arts and culture remain vibrant and access to a range of information, services, and programs that libraries provide is protected in light of the current fiscal and political climate, the Committee’s budget includes \$47.5 million for libraries, including \$16.7 million for regional library local aid, \$17.6 million for municipal libraries and \$6.2 million for technology and automated resource networks, and \$25.5 million for the Massachusetts Cultural Council to support local creative initiatives.

Health & Human Services

Access to high-quality health care and human services remains vital to the overall well-being of our Commonwealth. To that end, the Committee’s budget makes a range of investments to further reinforce and strengthen our state’s safety net and provide the resources to expand the health and human services workforce in light of ongoing fiscal constraints.

The Committee’s budget recommends key investments and reforms across the health and human services sector. To the benefit of safety net hospitals, insurers, and the state, this budget recommends reforms to the hospital assessment and payor surcharges that will ensure the long-term stability of health and human service programming. To further advance health equity in the Commonwealth, this budget supports the continuation of MassHealth coverage for doula services, including the implementation of a new doula certification program under the Department of Public Health. Furthermore, this budget supports the continuation of health equity incentive payments under the recently launched Health Equity Program framework to identify areas for improvement in various care settings.

Additionally, to address the Commonwealth’s ongoing health and human services workforce challenges, the Committee budget invests in direct-care providers across the continuum of care by increasing Chapter 257 service rates with \$390 million in Fiscal Year 2025.

These important investments and reforms underscore the Committee’s strong commitment to ensuring accessible and quality health and human services for Massachusetts residents.

MassHealth

The Committee's budget funds MassHealth at a total of \$20.33 billion (\$8.19 billion net), providing over 2 million of our Commonwealth's children, seniors, and low-income residents access to comprehensive health care coverage.

Following the end of the federally required pause on eligibility redeterminations in April 2023, MassHealth began to evaluate the eligibility status of its entire 2.4-million-member caseload. This redetermination process resulted in a net caseload decrease of nearly 360,000 members from the peak of 2.4 million members, with 1.8 million renewals, 810,000 departures, and 310,000 new members.

The anticipated loss of more than \$820M net in enhanced federal reimbursements tied to the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) and non-discretionary spending increases (e.g. Medicare premium growth and personal care attendant or PCA collective bargaining increases) require MassHealth to absorb roughly \$1 billion net before accounting for average health care cost growth.

Considering these fiscal challenges, the Committee's budget funds MassHealth responsibly and prioritizes the maintenance of services, including the restoration of funding levels necessary to protect accessible eligibility thresholds and existing benefit levels for the Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program.

- \$582.1 million for nursing facility Medicaid rates, including the continuation of an additional \$112 million in expanded base rate payments to maintain competitive wages in the Commonwealth's nursing facility workforce.
- \$113 million over House 2 levels for the Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program to prevent service reductions and maintain accessible eligibility thresholds.
- \$45 million over Fiscal Year 2024 spending for increased rates to Day Habitation providers so that more members with the most complex needs can return to pre-pandemic levels of care.
- \$7 million over Fiscal Year 2024 spending for increased rates to Continuous Skilled Nurses (CSNs) to enhance workforce competitiveness for Registered Nurse (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) positions.

Mental Health

Under the leadership of Senate President Spilka, the Senate has always led on ensuring behavioral and mental health care is prioritized and delivered in Massachusetts in an accessible and equitable manner to people who need it. As we continue our efforts to build upon the landmark success of the 2022 Mental Health ABC Act, the Committee's budget invests nearly \$1.3 billion to protect

and deliver a wide range of mental health services and prevention programs critical to the well-being of adults and children in need.

- \$622.3 million for Adult Support Services, including assisted outpatient programming and comprehensive care coordination among health care providers. This also includes the annualization of higher provider rates to raise wages for social services workers.
- \$385.3 million for DMH hospital and community-based services, including funding for essential staffing levels.
- \$130.5 million for children’s mental health services, including \$3.9 million for the Massachusetts Child Psychiatric Access Program (MCPAP) and MCPAP for Moms to address mental health needs of pregnant and postpartum women.
- \$26.7 million for student behavioral health services across the University of Massachusetts, state universities, community colleges, K-12 schools, and early education centers.
- \$26.6 million for Statewide Homeless Services.
- \$25 million for emergency department diversion initiatives for children, adolescents, and adults.
- \$20 million to recapitalize the Behavioral Health, Access, Outreach and Support Trust Fund to support targeted behavioral health initiatives.
- \$17.1 million for the Forensic Services Program, which maintains funding for mental health assessments and consultations in juvenile court clinics.
- \$16.5 million in the Department of Housing and Community Development and \$19.5 million in DMH line items for housing vouchers for DMH clients to transition into housing and community-based services.
- \$6 million to expand jail diversion initiatives to divert individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders from the criminal justice system and connect them with appropriate treatment.

Public Health

With the pandemic in the rearview mirror, the Senate is acutely aware that support for our state’s public health infrastructure is vital to the Commonwealth. To that end, the Committee’s budget invests over \$1 billion, solidifying the Senate’s commitment to protecting the public health, while centering equity in our efforts to further enhancing and improving the quality of life for Massachusetts residents.

- \$217 million for DPH hospital operations to meet higher staffing costs and ensure sick individuals receive the care they require.
- \$75.5 million for domestic violence prevention services.
- \$30.9 million for early intervention services, to ensure supports are accessible and available to infants and young toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities.
- \$29.8 million for the State Lab and Disease Unit.
- \$29.4 million for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.
- \$26.1 million for school-based health programming and services.
- \$25.1 million for family and adolescent health, including \$9.2 million for comprehensive family planning services and \$6.7 million to enhance federal Title X family planning funding.

- \$14.2 million for suicide prevention and intervention, with an additional \$1.4 million for Samaritans Inc. and \$1.1 million for the Call-2-Talk suicide prevention hotline. This investment will fully fund 988, the 24/7 suicide and crisis lifeline.
- \$14 million for maternal and child health, including \$10.4 million for pediatric palliative care services for terminally-ill children and language to ensure that children up to age 22 can continue to be served through the program.
- \$12.5 million for grants to support local and regional boards of health.
- \$12.6 million for the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative, \$7.7 million for Youth At-Risk matching grants and \$4 million for youth violence prevention grants.
- \$7.9 million for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) and pediatric SANE programs, providing safe and integrated services to protect children from abuse.
- \$5 million for workforce supports at community health centers to support the allied health workforce.
- \$2.7 million for the Childhood Lead Poisoning and Prevention Trust Fund.
- \$2 million for grants for improvements in reproductive health access, infrastructure, and safety.
- \$1 million for the STOP Stroke Program to collect and report on stroke data and promote public awareness of stroke symptoms.
- \$1 million for a doula certification program to increase the availability of doula services across the Commonwealth.

Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Continuing our commitment to ensuring access to treatment and intervention, the Committee's budget maintains the gains we have collectively made over the recent years to protect access to care, investing in a wide array of programs and services, including \$197.9 million to support the continuum of substance use disorder treatment and intervention services, critical to some of our most vulnerable populations in need who continue to struggle with the scourge of substance use.

- \$197.9 million for Substance Use Treatment Services.
- \$10 million for the expansion of low threshold housing to support homeless individuals affected by substance use disorder across the Commonwealth.
- \$10 million for additional family supportive housing programs in the Commonwealth to ensure families struggling with opioid use disorder have the shelter and care they need.
- \$7 million for ten new recovery centers to enhance geographic access and equity to services.
- \$3 million for the Massachusetts Access to Recovery to help individuals with opioid use disorder reenter the workforce.
- \$2 million for case management and residential rehabilitation services to help individuals transition between levels of treatment and find support through each step of recovery.
- \$1 million for investments to address shortages in the addiction treatment workforce through outreach and recruitment efforts and support for continuing education.
- \$750K for transportation services for people to access substance use treatment.

People with Disabilities

The Committee's budget – once again - invests \$3 billion in a range of services and supports for people with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities. Protecting equal and fair access to opportunities for these individuals, the Committee's budget dedicates necessary resources to support services essential to the overall safety, health, and success of this population.

- \$288 million for the DDS Community Day and Work Program.
- \$124.1 million for the Turning 22 program, which provides services and supports to help young people with disabilities transition to adulthood.
- \$119.4 million for DDS to support respite and family services.
- \$61.9 million for specialized services for adults with autism, which is expected to provide services to an additional 200 adults in FY 2025.
- \$40 million for DDS Transportation services to ensure individuals can access services despite ongoing staffing shortages.
- \$29.3 million for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind services.
- \$28.7 million for head injury treatment services.
- \$26.2 million for the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's vocational rehabilitation services.
- \$16.9 million for the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- \$11.9 million for the Disabled Persons Protection Commission, including funding to support the caregiver abuse registry mandated by Nicky's Law.
- \$9.9 million for services for children with autism including \$5.5 million for the Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver.
- \$8 million for the eleven independent living centers across the state providing networks of support to help individuals of all abilities access opportunities and build community.

Elder Affairs

Recognizing that we must do everything we can to help and support our growing elder population despite increasing fiscal constraints, the Committee's budget provides resources to bolster several programs and services that focus on ensuring our elders receive the care in the community required to support their overall health and wellness.

- \$331.7 million in total for the elder home care program and case management, providing critical health and social services to help seniors remain in their homes.
- \$47.9 million for the Protective Services Program to prevent elder abuse and neglect.
- \$28 million for grants to local Councils on Aging to increase assistance per elder to \$15 from \$14 in FY 2024.
- \$11.8 million for Meals on Wheels and other nutrition programs for seniors.
- \$11.4 million for the Supportive Senior Housing Program to support 61 sites throughout the Commonwealth.
- \$5.7 million for the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.
- \$2.5 million for Geriatric Mental Health Services.
- \$1 million for the Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone (SHINE) Program to assist all residents on Medicare with insurance information and counseling.

Support for Children and Working Families

Throughout the current fiscal year, Massachusetts has faced challenging fiscal headwinds. In many states, programs designed to fight poverty and strengthen families would be the first to see budget cuts. But despite these challenges, the Committee has not lost sight of its commitment to support our most vulnerable citizens and working families. As such, this budget takes steps to not only maintain progress made in recent years, but also build upon this success with new investments in child welfare, food security, and economic opportunity.

TAFDC/EAEDC Benefits. The Committee's budget continues to prioritize direct assistance to working families by once again including a 10 percent expansion to Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) benefits over current levels. In recent years, the Senate has led the way in expanding these benefits which delivers immediate relief to individuals and provides direct economic stimulus to our communities. This increase signals the determination of the Senate to uphold its commitment to support working families, amidst the current revenue outlook.

School Clothing Allowance. The Committee recognizes the challenges associated with raising a child in a high-cost state, especially for low-income families. In response, our budget sustains support for a \$450 per child clothing allowance, providing timely assistance to families and every child seeking weather-appropriate clothing for the upcoming school year.

Food Security. The Committee's budget provides \$87 million in critical funding to support a host of food security initiatives including \$42 million for Emergency Food Assistance to ensure that our residents can navigate the historical levels in food insecurity, and \$20 million for the Health Incentives Program (HIP) to ensure full operation of the program to maintain access to healthy food options for SNAP households. In addition, our budget invests \$15 million for the Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program, and \$10 million for the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program (FSIG). With these robust investments, the Senate continues to fervently address food insecurity challenges facing families and support increased access to basic food needs that households deserve.

- \$499.5 million for Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and \$179 million for Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) to provide the necessary support as caseloads increase, and continue the Deep Poverty increases.
- \$373.9 million for services for DCF-involved children and families.
- \$311.5 million for DCF Social Workers.

- \$139.5 million for DCF family support and stabilization services for the purpose of preserving family unity and preventing the placement of children into foster families or congregate care facilities.
- \$96.4 million for DTA Caseworkers.
- \$42 million for Emergency Food Assistance to ensure that citizens in need can navigate the historic levels of food insecurity and the rising cost of food, and \$10 million for the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program.
- \$33.8 million for Family Resource Centers to provide mental health resources and programming available to families, including \$3 million for the Juvenile Court Mental Health Advocacy Project administered by Health Law Advocates, Inc.
- \$20 million for the Healthy Incentives Program, to maintain access to healthy food options for SNAP households and support for local farmers.
- \$18.4 million for the DTA Employment Services Program to help low-income people move toward economic independence, including \$3 million for programs operated by the Office of Refugees and Immigrants and \$200,000 for the DTA Works Internship Program.
- \$15.5 million for the Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program.
- \$11.2 million for DCF Lead Agencies to connect children with community-based services.
- \$5.5 million for Children Advocacy Centers, including \$1.1 million for the Massachusetts Children’s Alliance, to sustain vital supports available to children that have been neglected or sexually abused.
- \$5 million for the Secure Jobs Connect program, providing job placement resources and assistance for homeless individuals.
- \$3.9 million for the Office of the Child Advocate.
- \$3.75 million for the Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma, providing trauma-informed training to professionals and organizations that work with children.
- \$1.6 million for Project Bread to support the Child Nutrition Outreach Program (CNOP) and the Food Source Hotline.

Veterans’ Services

In the face of challenging fiscal circumstances, the Senate continues to faithfully uphold its commitment to support the brave men and women who have served our nation honorably to protect our liberty and our way of life. Our \$198 million budget for the Executive Office of Veterans’ Services makes meaningful investments to meet the needs of our veteran population.

This includes \$109.6 million to support the core services under the Executive Office, including veteran outreach centers, shelters for homeless veterans, and veterans’ benefits, as well as \$88.3 million to fund the Chelsea and Holyoke Soldiers’ Homes. These funds ensure that the Commonwealth will continue to lead the way in meeting the everyday needs of the men and women who have served our nation selflessly with honor.

- \$11.7 million for the Executive Office of Veterans’ Services Administration.

- \$765,000 for Office of the Veteran Advocate, to provide critical oversight to veteran-serving agencies and offer an independent voice for veterans in state government.
- \$68.2 million for veterans' benefits provided by municipalities, including cash, fuel and rent assistance, employment training and placement and health benefits.
- \$53.1 million for the Chelsea Soldiers' Home.
- \$33.4 million for the Holyoke Soldiers' Home.
- \$8.5 million for Veterans' Outreach Centers providing peer counseling, employment skills building and job search assistance, substance use disorder counseling and other services.
- \$2 million for veterans' mental and behavioral health services through the Home Base program.
- \$724,239 for outreach and services targeted to women veterans.

Housing

As we move to shape a more fiscally sustainable path for the Commonwealth, affordable housing opportunities remain out of reach for too many. Longstanding housing challenges are being exacerbated by the influx of new arrivals and migrants entering Massachusetts. But, despite the challenges, we have remained laser focused on supporting Massachusetts residents to find stable housing. To that end, the Committee's budget invests \$1.14 billion, dedicating resources for housing stability, residential assistance, emergency shelter services, and homelessness assistance programs, ensuring we deploy a humane, responsible, and sustainable approach to providing families and individuals in need with an access point to secure housing.

- \$325.3 million for Emergency Assistance Family Shelters, in addition to \$175 million in resources passed in the recent supplemental budget, will place our shelter system on a fiscal glidepath into FY 2025
- \$231.5 million, including \$12.5 million in funds carried forward from FY 2024, for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program.
- \$197.4 million for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition.
- \$115 million for assistance to local housing authorities.
- \$110.8 million for assistance for homeless individuals.
- \$57.3 million for the HomeBASE program.
- \$27 million for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), including \$10.7 million in funds carried forward from FY 2024, providing rental assistance to people with disabilities.
- \$10.5 million for assistance for unaccompanied homeless youth.
- \$9 million for the Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs).
- \$8.9 million for sponsored-based supportive permanent housing.
- \$8.4 million for the Home and Healthy for Good re-housing and supportive services program, including funding to support homeless LGBTQQ youth.
- \$6.5 million for Resident Service Coordinators at local housing authorities.
- \$3 million for the Housing Assistance for Re-Entry Transition program.

- \$2.5 for the Accessible Affordable Housing Grant Program to support individuals with disabilities.
- \$2 million for the Tenancy Preservation Program.

Economic Development and Workforce Training

The economic and workforce development needs of every community, every region, and every employer are critical to the underlying economic health and prosperity of our Commonwealth. As such, increasing the capacity of our post-pandemic workforce and expanding economic opportunity are key priorities, as we aim to unlock our state’s potential and move Massachusetts forward on a more sustainable path. To that end, the Committee’s budget invests in programs essential to improving our economic competitiveness, creating workforce pathways, and leveling the playing field for our employers.

- \$15.7 million for summer jobs and work-readiness training for at-risk youth through the YouthWorks program. This will combine with \$23 million in remaining American Rescue Plan funding for the program.
- \$10.4 million for Career Technical Institutes to increase our skilled worker population and provide residents access to career technical training opportunities. This will combine with \$12.3 million in remaining American Rescue Plan funding for the program.
- \$9.9 million for One-Stop Career Centers.
- \$7.5 million for investments to empower and support communities most disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system.
- \$5 million for Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. This will pair with \$12.8 million in remaining American Rescue Plan funding for the program.
- \$5 million for Small Business Technical Assistance grants.
- \$2.5 million for the Advanced Manufacturing Program.
- \$2.45 million for the Massachusetts Cybersecurity Innovation Fund, including \$1.5 million to continue partnerships with community colleges and state universities to provide cybersecurity workforce training to students and cybersecurity services to municipalities, non-profits, and small businesses.
- \$2 million for Regional Economic Development Organizations.
- \$1.7 million for the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership.
- \$1.5 million for microlending grants to support small businesses.
- \$1.35 million for the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative Innovation Institute.
- \$1 million for employment programs for young adults with disabilities.

Climate and Environment

Fighting the threat of climate change that is increasingly touching our lives, protecting our environment, preserving our natural resources, supporting our agricultural sector, and securing our clean energy future all remain critical priorities for the Senate. To that end, the Committee's budget provides meaningful resources, investing \$478 million to deliver on our commitment to protect our precious environmental resources, ensure clean air and water, and take steps to preserve our way of life from the increasing and looming threat of climate change.

- \$159.2 million for the Department of Conservation and Recreation to support the Commonwealth's state parks system and the need for socially distant outdoor leisure.
- \$86.1 million for the Department of Environmental Protection to steward the Commonwealth's air, land, and waterways.
- \$64.4 million for the Department of Agricultural Resources to promote the Commonwealth's food security and local food economy.
- \$26.2 million for the Department of Public Utilities to ensure proper pipeline and utility safety.
- \$10 million for climate change adaptation and preparedness programs to enhance resilience and to address the mounting threat of climate change.
- \$5.4 million for the Division of Ecological Restoration to protect the Commonwealth's rivers, wetlands, and watersheds.
- \$5 million for a transfer to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to support investments in clean transportation, building retrofitting and the green economy workforce.

Public Safety and Judiciary – Keeping Massachusetts Safe and Justice Reinvestment

Judiciary

The Senate has always centered fair and equal treatment under the law as a permanent bedrock of our democracy and the Commonwealth. To that end, the Committee's budget supports and invests in programs that value equal justice and fair treatment and protects the principle of due process, further improving access to opportunities for individuals hoping to re-enter society as law-abiding citizens.

- \$925.2M million for the Trial Court system.
- \$336.2 million for the Committee for Public Counsel Services.
- \$193.7 million for the Office of Probation.
- \$49 million for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation.
- \$3.1 million for the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee.
- \$3 million for Prisoners' Legal Services.

Public Safety, Justice Reinvestment, and Recidivism Reduction

Reflective of the Senate's sustained commitment to accountability and transparency throughout law enforcement and the criminal justice system, while keeping Massachusetts safe, the Committee's budget invests over \$250 million to support programs and services across the state's

entire criminal justice system and public safety apparatus. It includes continued funding to reduce recidivism and help populations disproportionately impacted, while investing to support our first responders, police, and fire personnel who serve to protect our citizens.

- \$737.8 million for the Sheriff's offices across the state, including \$737,000 thousand for the Massachusetts Sheriffs Association.
- \$520.5 million for the Department of State Police.
- \$175.2 million for District Attorney's offices across the state, including \$7.4 million for the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association.
- \$42.7 million for the Department of Fire Services, including \$2 million for the Student Awareness Fire Education program and \$1.5 million for the Critical Incident Stress Management program.
- \$24.2 million for the Municipal Police Training Committee, including funding to continue the implementation of police training requirements established pursuant to the 2020 police reform legislation.
- \$23.7 million for the Massachusetts Alcohol and Substance Abuse Center to provide education, treatment, and re-entry planning for people who are incarcerated and civilly committed males.
- \$15.6 million for a grant program to provide community-based residential re-entry services.
- \$12.9 million for the Shannon Grants gang violence prevention and intervention program.
- \$9.5 million for the POST Commission, four other small police reform related commissions, and a police reform reserve.
- \$7 million for the continuation of an emerging adult reentry program to help reduce recidivism among our younger resident populations.
- \$6.0 million for Municipal Public Safety and Emergency Staffing grants.
- \$5.1 million to expand a pilot collaboration between MassHealth, the Judiciary, DOC, and the Sheriffs to provide behavioral health support to justice-involved individuals in their communities.
- \$5 million for expanded behavioral health treatment at DOC facilities.
- \$5 million for the Non-Profit Security Grants, including \$300,000 to support security personnel at non-profits vulnerable to acts of violence.
- \$2.3 million to expand a transitional youth early intervention probation pilot to provide recidivism reduction programming to high-risk or high-need youth.
- \$1.5 million for DOC's recidivism reduction programming.
- \$2 million for a Safe Neighborhood Initiative, modelled after the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods, to develop comprehensive solutions that reduce crime and protect communities in response to emerging statewide violent trends.
- \$2 million to support the Ralph Gants Reentry Services Program.
- \$1 million for a matching funds grant program to assist communities making public health-oriented adjustments to their public safety systems, including targeted reforms such as jail diversion programs, de-escalation training, and hiring behavioral health staff.

